

105  
L/DCI

Executive Registry

Routing Slip

74-046

TO:

	ACTION	INFO.		ACTION	INFO.
1 DCI			11	IG	
2 DDCI			12	D/PPB	
3 DDS&T			13	SAVA	
4 DDI			14	ASST/DCI	✓
5 DDO			15	AO/DCI	
6 DDM&S			16	EX/SEC	
7 D/DCI/IC			17		
8 D/ONE			18		
9 GC			19		
10 LC			20		

SUSPENSE

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Remarks:

Did we give  
him this line? -

No.



DCI/DDCI

13/3/74

# Donald R. Morris

## Employment of newsmen as agents/part

### Post News Analysis

The recent flurry in the media touched off by the accusation that the CIA employs a number of working newsmen as fulltime agents overlooks a fundamental point that the public has never managed to grasp. Part of the fault lies with the intelligence community itself, which for obvious reasons never talks about what it is doing.

This is all very well, but it leaves media and public in the dark and free to speculate — the speculation is based on a firm conviction that the authors of "Mission Impossible" and the James Bond saga are telling it like it is, and even the wildest of the speculative flights soon become the gospel of folklore. If the in-

telligence community were less reticent about the mechanics of its activities — about the "how" the operations are carried out — there would be less anxiety about what it is up to, for it would be obvious that a number of the activities it has been accused of are quite impossible.

In the case of the newsmen, the accusation was that several full-time professional journalists were serving as agents. The CIA does indeed recruit Americans working overseas as agents, and it also places its own officials with American firms overseas. (Alas for romance, it does not send Americans overseas to live under false identities, although its officers may on occasion use a pseudonym in making casual contacts.)

No commercial enterprise,

however — from National Widgets to the major newspapers — need worry about their employes. Such placement of officials can only occur with the full knowledge and active cooperation of the chief executive of the firm. The agency even maintains an extensive operating division to arrange and regulate such cases.

Clandestine activity is a full-time job, with a staggering amount of paperwork involved. It would be quite impossible to follow such a career while holding down a regular job — especially the type of job where you are expected to appear at 0830 and be gainfully employed until 1700, where your working day is under constant observation. This alone rules out the vast majority of occupations, and

limits viable "deep cover" slots to independent workers — commission salesmen, people working out of "one-man offices" and the like. The details of such employment, and the reimbursement, are worked out by the agency in advance, and the leadership of the company involved always knows about it.

So much for officials. The agency may also recruit Americans already working for overseas firms as agents, although certain occupations (including newsmen), are taboo. But even in such a case the firm's permission is almost invariably secured first, above all if the potential agent's use has the remotest bearing on the work involved. If the candidate is a junior or middle-executive man, he would certainly inform his superiors of a recruitment pitch, and to obviate any risk

of the horrendous flap that would follow such an incident, the agency clears such approaches before they are made. The intelligence community is not staffed with clots, wild men or children, and they have a lively appreciation of the consequences of their activities. Such precautions in recruiting agents are the bedrock of common sense.

In short, the chances of any official of the CIA masquerading abroad as a full-time professional journalist are remote. The chances of an actual journalist working for a major newspaper or wireservice while moonlighting as a CIA agent are equally remote, and the chances of such a man serving as an agent without the complete knowledge of the head of the newspaper or the wireservice are nil.